

THE FEDERAL SPOTLIGHT



CSC Warns Employees Just Debts Must Be Paid

By JOSEPH YOUNG
Star Staff Writer

The Civil Service Commission is taking a firmer stand toward government employees who do not pay their just debts.

It has issued a new pamphlet emphasizing that federal workers are expected to pay all their taxes and their just debts and that failure to do so could lead to their removal.

The CSC said:

"An employee is expected to meet all just financial obligations, especially those — such as federal, state or local taxes — which are imposed by law. A 'just financial obligation' means one which is rightfully yours to pay. It can be taxes, or a bill you admit you owe, or one which a court has judged you duty-bound to pay. You are expected to meet these obligations in a proper and timely manner so as not to bring discredit on the government as your employer. Failure to pay just financial obligations in a proper and timely manner can result in disciplinary action, possibly even removal."

To show that the government means business in this matter, federal agencies are cooperating with the City of New York in a crackdown on the estimated 20 percent of the 150,000 federal workers there who have not paid their city income taxes. The government has given the City of New York a complete list of the delinquent employees together with their addresses and other information and will take disciplinary action against them if they don't pay their city taxes.

In its pamphlet, the CSC cautions federal workers against getting involved with loan sharks and those businesses that gouge customers with exorbitant interest rates. It urges employees to contact their better business

bureaus or local chambers of commerce if they have any doubts about the ethics or reputation of firms they plan to do business with.

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A BUREAUCRAT'S BUREAUCRAT — A group of Navy employees in the Naval Materiel Command Support Activity have written the following memo to Navy Secretary John Chafee:

"In our organization we have a GS-13 whose primary function is to get in everyone's way. He has no conception of what's being done; yet he has the audacity to patrol the area checking the lights that blink on the machines.

"If question arises concerning data processing he acts like a damn ostrich running from fear. Being a GS-13, he makes sure that no rubber bands are on the floor; that the floor is swept and mopped; that no one smokes or chews gum; paper clips are in their proper containers and the halls are swept. These jobs are contracted out to some cleaning organization yet we have to perform them also.

"One of us asked him who the secretary of Navy was and he didn't know. He also was asked who was the secretary of state, treasury, HEW, and he didn't know. But he did say that Daddy Warbucks was the father of Little Orphan Annie. We didn't question him about the President."

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STILL UNDECIDED — Rep. David Henderson, D-N.C., chairman of the House Civil Service Manpower subcommittee, still has his doubts about the Ervin bill of rights for government employees.

Henderson, whose group blocked the Senate-approved measure last year, says he strongly favors protection of

government employees' constitutional rights and their rights of privacy. But he said he was undecided whether this could be best accomplished through legislation or through action by the Civil Service Commission. He noted that the CSC has taken action to correct some of the inequities.

Henderson pointed to one provision in the Ervin bill that he said troubled him. He said this would permit an employee to have an attorney with him even when questioned about such things as tardiness or taking an unauthorized coffee break. "This goes too far and could unduly consume working time, or even discourage you from questioning such matters," he said.

However, Henderson said his group would consider such legislation this year. No one claims the Ervin bill is perfect, but it is a good measure and should be enacted with whatever changes are needed to make it more workable.

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NO CAUSE FOR ALARM — President Nixon's memorandum to departments and agencies directing them to reduce the number of jobs is not intended to cut federal employment beyond what already has been ordered by Congress. Rather it is a move to convince Congress that the government can make job cuts of its own without the necessity of the vacancy-filling restrictions imposed by Congress last year. The administration wants Congress to repeal the provision that limits agencies to filling only three out of four job vacancies.

Nixon's order covers all departments and agencies, including those exempted by Congress from the employment restrictions. However, the Budget Bureau will take into consideration each agency's workload and act accordingly. The Nixon approach does not involve any fixed formulas or procedures for reducing employment, except that any cuts should be by the 30-40-30 rule, with 30 percent of vacancies considered less than essential.

The Federal Diary

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Former OPA Lawyer Makes Good

By Willard Clopton Jr.
and Mike Causey

A middle-aged man has been making the rounds of Federal agencies lately, reminiscing about the time when, during World War II, he was a Grade P-3 lawyer in the Office of Price Administration.

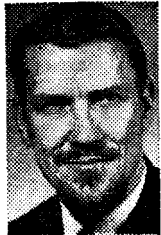
He used to work in old Tempo D, down on Independence Avenue, and his main job was writing letters to people telling them no, they couldn't have an exception to the rationing regulations.

"A P-3 lawyer in the OPA in 1942 was a very low form of life, I can assure you," the man recalls. He adds that his job was "very boring at times . . . There were times that I really wondered if what I was doing really meant anything."

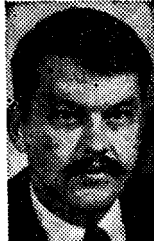
"Looking back, I realize that it did," he goes on. "What made it mean something was that we felt that we were part of a bigger cause, that by what we did we were helping to make possible success at a very high level."

The speaker, who relates the anecdote often along his agency travels, is a fellow who's come a long way since the days of OPA. His name is Richard M. Nixon.

Toning up: The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, which in the past has focused its keep-trim mes-



Clopton



Causey

sage on the Nation's youth, is readying a media assault on the kids' flabby elders.

A series of television commercials and advertisements will encourage the grown-ups to take up swimming, jogging, cycling, tennis and other activities. The narrator on TV will be — who else? — actor John Wayne.

Privacy: The chairman of a key House subcommittee is hunting that he may again try to block enactment of the "right-to-privacy" bill that would bar Federal agencies from probing too closely into their employees' private lives.

The bill, introduced in the last session by Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.), passed the Senate by a lopsided vote, but died in the House Manpower Subcommittee, headed by another Tarheel, Rep. David N. Henderson (D-N.C.).

Ervin recently reintroduced the bill and won the cosponsorship of 55 other Senators. It still must clear Henderson's group, however, and there the chairman still has his doubts.

Henderson says he approves of the bill's intent, but he isn't sure the problem can't be handled administratively, in light of steps the Civil Service Commission has taken in the past year to end some of the worst abuses.

He also says he's worried about one provision of the law that would assure an employee of having counsel or an adviser present during interrogation that could lead to disciplinary action. This, he said, "could be interpreted to mean that if you, as a supervisor, questioned any employee about even trivial matters, such as tardiness or coffee breaks, he or she could demand that counsel or other person of choice be present. I think this goes too far and could unduly consume work-

ing time, or even discourage you from questioning such matters."

The Ervin bill would also bar use of lie detectors and psychological tests and would forbid agencies to ask employees their race or religion or to seek reports on their outside activities and personal habits.

Loser? Sen. Edmund S. Muskie's impressive campaign for the Vice Presidency clearly cost him his membership in U.S. Senators Anonymous. Before his race, the Maine Democrat was averaging two speaking invitations a day. Now he averages 20 to 25 and one of his secretaries spends almost her whole time arranging his travels and appearances.

Jobs: Air Force needs Grade 2 through 5 typists, stenographers and secretaries for duty in Arlington. There are full-time and temporary jobs open. Call OX 4-8754. The Marine Corps Institute needs three clerk-typists, Grades 2 and 3. Phone OX 3-2671.